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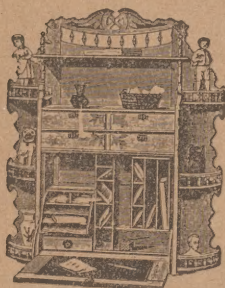


VOL. X.—No. 76.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER, 1891.

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PLAIN TALK.

VOL. X.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER, 1891.

No. 76.

"TOP BOOTS."

BY NATALIE LORD RICE.



UT Top Boots."—

"Can't help it, got to go," said Top Boots.

He opened the door. It was the day before Christmas, and there was snow in the air. Top Boots stood for a moment bracing himself against the wind; a sturdy, alert fellow, business-like from his tall cap to his big top-boots. Then he swung out suddenly into the whirl of snow, and the school house door banged behind him.

One by one the boys straggled back into the school room.

"He's all right," said Pelton. He'll get back before school begins."

"That isn't the point," said Wayne. Wayne was Top Boots' chum. He had much pride in Top Boots, in his quick, hearty ways, his rank in the algebra class, and his "standing high jumps." To Wayne's thinking Top Boots had but one fault: he ran too many errands. He was too good-natured; he ran errands for the teachers, for the old ladies up and down the street, for the doctor and the druggist and the greenhouse man, for the other fellows, for the children even, if they asked him. It did not seem to take much of his time either. He had a knack about it. To be sure, he grumbled sometimes but he always went. It was said of him that he wore out more shoe leather than any other fellow in town. But this morning he had gone down to Clancy street for stained glass "jewels" without a sign of grumbling and it was stormy and cold.

"What is the point, then?" said Pelton.

"Why, you see," began Wayne, he led Pelton to the window and spoke softly.

"You see Miss Bradley was telling Top Boots and me about some stones she's got, jewels, you know, gems. She's got a few, and she said she'd bring some in to-day and show to us after school if we wanted to stop. Well, that's all right, but come to find out, she had to send Top Boots over to the window glass folks this morning for glass stones. I don't know what she wants them for."

"Well, isn't that all right, if Top Boots wants to go?"

"Yes, but I wanted to show Top Boots something." Wayne glanced cautiously across the room. He could see his sister Betty among the girls. She seemed to be repeating a joke, for her eyes twinkled, and her small brown hands waved merrily to and fro. She looked at Wayne instantly and laughed.

"It'll be a bad storm by to-morrow," said Wayne, and then he added hurriedly: "Come into the entry. There! I wanted to show Top Boots *this*!"

He drew from his pocket a folded paper.

"Powders!" said Pelton. But he took the paper in his hands and unfolded it as one who understood the process.

There lay within it a tiny flashing stone of a rich bright red. He moved the paper in the light of the entry window. Wayne watched him eagerly.

"You know about stones" he said, "What kind of a stone is it? It was given to us for a ruby."

"It's a ruby, I think. Its as fine a one as I've seen. I wish there was a better light. Come in the other room."

Wayne shook his head.

"I don't want Betty to see it. I think she suspects something's up now. Father had it given to him awhile ago, and we've been saving it for Betty's Christmas. We thought

she might have it set sometime if it was good enough; she's wanted a red stone ever since I can remember. Is it good enough to set?"

"It's good enough to set," said Pelton. I can't tell whether you'll think it good enough for your sister."

He laughed mischievously. There were few things good enough for merry Betty Wayne.

He dropped the sparkling bit of red within its paper and put it carefully in his pocket again.

Then school began; there was but little studying that morning, Christmas was near at hand. Outside, the snow drifted softly against the windows, and the blinds rattled in the wind. Top Boots came in late bringing a breeze with him.

At recess the three boys, Wayne, Pelton and Top Boots, hurried into Miss Bradley's class-room. Top

Boots untied the bundle of glass "jewels," and they scattered in shining heaps upon the desk. They were of all colors and of many sizes, bright golden ones as large as a silver dollar, tiny red ones cut like Wayne's ruby in many facets.

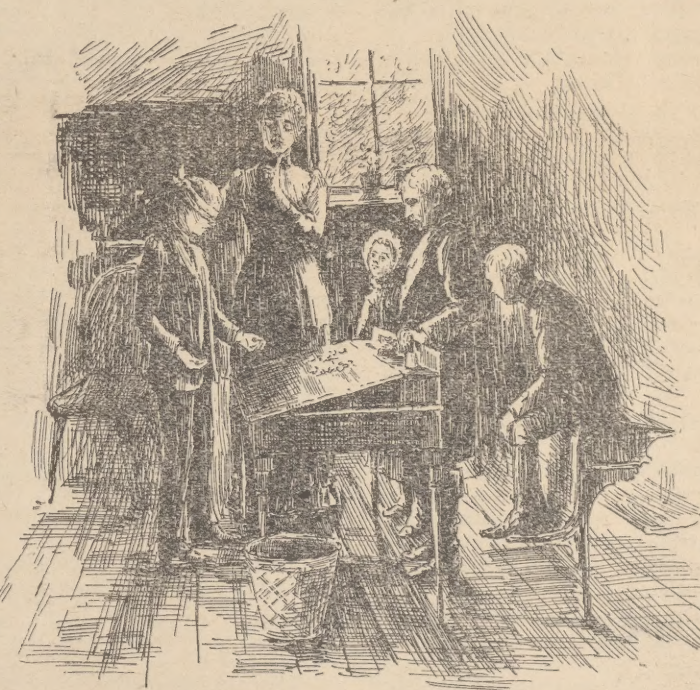
"How can you tell the difference?" cried Wayne.

He took out his own stone from its paper, tossed the paper upon the desk, and handed the stone to Miss Bradley. Pelton was picking the glass jewels from the table and dropping them from his fingers, much as one skips a pebble. There came a knock upon the door; Wayne answered it. The twinkling eyes of his sister Betty smiled upon him.

"Can I see Miss Bradley?"

"Yes—No—wait a minute."

He jumped back to the desk. Miss Bradley arose from her chair and said: "Come in." The red stone sparkled in its paper. Wayne crumpled the paper in a wad about the



stone and jammed it into his pocket. Betty came to the desk, and lifted a handful of the glowing jewels; and laughed, and watched them flash.

"Oh!" she said "If they were only real, and to-morrow's Christmas!"

Top Boots and Pelton made sly faces at each other behind Wayne. Pelton went on skipping the "jewels" upon the table. Betty asked him why he did this.

"For fun!" said Pelton. Then he inquired, with the air of a schoolmaster, if she didn't know that real jewels had a different feeling from glass ones. Betty looked at Miss Bradley.

"That is true," said Miss Bradley. "We might experiment after school and see."

So when the class had assembled that afternoon for the informal little exhibition, and Miss Bradley had spread out her own small store of garnets and moonstones and sapphires upon the table, Pelton was invited to take his stand beside her and be blindfolded. Top Boots tied the handkerchief and he tied it tight. The real gems and the glass jewels lay in two rows; from one row Miss Bradley chose two stones, a blue and a white.

"Which is glass?"

Top Boots nudged Wayne, but no one spoke or whispered. Pelton dropped both jewels into the palm of his hand, held them a second, rubbed them between his fingers and almost in a moment laughed out loud.

"Neither of them!" said he.

As the boys and girls began to clap, Pelton spoke again.

"One is a sapphire and I should think the other might be a quartz."

"Bnt, how do you tell?" said Top Boots. "Let me try Pelt."

So Pelton dropped the stones into Top Boots' hand. Top Boots busied himself with them for several minutes. He took a glass jewel and compared it with the others.

"The real ones feel sort of greasy" he said at last; "They slip like ice and they are cold in my hand. The glass is light and sticky, I mean it sticks in my fingers: it won't slip easily. Well, that is worth knowing."

Top Boots stayed in the class-room after the others had left, but Wayne and Pelton ran down to the steps and Betty followed them at once, snugly wrapped up in her fur hood and her fuzzy coat.

"It's a bad storm, Betty" said Wayne, "but I guess between Top Boots and me we can shovel you out somehow."

"What's that?" asked Top Boots, suddenly. "Don't count on me I've got to go over beyond the bridge."

"What, you're crazy Top Boots."

"No," said Top Boots, "that's where you're off. I'm exceedingly level-headed."

Miss Bradley's got a seamstress that's got a small boy that's got—

"I don't doubt he has—something catching, too."

"Keep quiet. He hasn't got any Christmas present or much of any— She said if I'd carry 'em down she'd settle with the glass man. They aren't worth ten cents. Run over to Clancy street and dump 'em in the store, Boots, you can't go all that way for nothing."

"It isn't for nothing," said Top Boots. He turned to Betty.

"Betty! wouldn't you like some pretty glass jewels for Christmas?"

"Wouldn't I!" said Betty. "You know I've been thinking all the time what pretty playthings they'd make!"

"You see!" said Top Boots.

He plunged out into the storm, and Wayne and Betty followed more deliberately. Pelton went with them.

"I don't believe," he said, "that Top Boots will go down to the bridge. It's a bad storm. Boots will give it up when he gets to Clancy street, and just leave the stuff at the glass-man's."

"No," said Wayne, "he's just goose enough to go. He was heartily tired of Top Boots' errands. But Pelton peering through the storm with his keen eyes, said positively that Top Boots had turned the Clancy street corner. This settled the question in Wayne's mind."

That evening as Top Boots sat snugly by the fire he thought much about the next day's merrymaking. And he thought more than all of the small brown-faced boy in the little house beyond the bridge, and of his ragged drab stocking waiting so patiently for Christmas to come and

fill it. Top Boots wished he had carried some apples to put in the stocking. The glass jewels were such a small present, and such a queer present. Then he remembered that Betty had called them pretty playthings.

But the next morning, after Top Boots' own Christmas surprises were over, he still found himself wondering about the small brown-faced boy with the drab stocking. It was a drab stocking with a faded pink stripe—Top Boots pitied the small boy who wore such a stocking as that. He went up garret and searched diligently among his battered, outgrown toys. He got out a blue pencil and an harmonica. Then he stuffed apples into one pocket, and nuts into the other, and put the pencil and the harmonica on top of the nuts, and set forth. The storm had cleared away, and the snow lay crisp and glittering on every side.

When he reached the little house beyond the bridge, at the end of his two mile walk, he knocked, and said "Merry Christmas" to the mother of the brown-faced boy, and went in. The small boy came quickly to look at him. He had a sticky face, and he was eating a doughnut. He put the doughnut upon the table and ran and brought the bundle of glass jewels, and held them up one by one for Top Boots to see, and laughed such gay little laughs.

"There's some pieces there," said the mother of the brown-faced boy, "but it don't seem as though they could be glass. They're the prettiest glass I ever saw."

By and by Top Boots started home. He left the apples and the nuts upon the kitchen table beside the doughnut. The small brown-faced boy followed him to the doorway, and puffed out his cheeks, and blew a joyful blast upon the harmonica—and laughed—and the wind blew the door shut.

Top Boots came back through the village with a face even brighter than before. Almost opposite Wayne's house he met Pelton.

"Hello, Pelt!" he said, "what's the trouble? You don't look very jolly for Christmas."

Pelton answered him nervously.

"I don't feel so. Wayne's getting me into a nice scrape. He took his ruby down to the jeweller's last night, and come to find out it's glass. He blames it on to me."

"Blames it on to you?"

"Yes! he does. He says I told him it was a ruby when I first saw it, and that's true. And he makes out that I mixed up the stones when I was skipping them there on the table. He don't say I did it on purpose. The worst of it is he's got the right of it. I was careless. But he was careless too—he mashed that stone right up in the paper without stopping to look. Didn't you see him do it? Well, I don't know what he expects me to do—unless I get him another. Wayne's wild—he's told Betty the whole thing."

"You come on into Wayne's," said Top Boots. "I can fix Wayne."

They hurried up the steps of Wayne's house, and Wayne himself came to the door. He looked excited and tired. Top Boots put his hand into his pocket and pulled out a bit of paper—

"There—Wayne! How's that?"

Wayne unfolded the paper hurriedly, and looked at Top Boots.

"Not —! Top Boots! Where did you get it? Where was it? Wasn't it—"

The ruby sparkled in the sunlight. Pelton drew a long breath, and whistled.

"I took a nice little walk this morning," said Top Boots, "and I found that in a bundle of glass jewels, in a house down beyond the bridge! Wasn't I smart?"

"Well Wayne," said Pelton—"You better take back what you said about Top Boots last night."

"I don't remember what I said," said Wayne, "but I'll say now—"

"You better just say nothing and run in the house and give it to Betty," said Top Boots.

Wayne held out his hand to Pelton.

"I suppose I was a crank just now, Pelt—"

"That's all right," said Pelton, "only I'd like to know where we'd have been if Top Boots hadn't stuck to his errands."

Then the three went into the house together, and Betty came to meet them, and Wayne gave her the paper with the ruby in it. And Top Boots said it was a Merry Christmas.

PHILATELY.

ALVAH DAVISON, - - - - - EDITOR,
176 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.



HENRY CLOTZ.

AMONG stamp collectors, New York City is held as the centre of philately, and justly so, as there are at least three times the number of earnest collectors within its precincts as could be shown by any other city in this country.

Among the Philatelic talent in and about the metropolis, there are none who are better nor more favorably known than the one whose photograph accompanies this sketch, Mr. Henry Clotz.

To find when he began collecting stamps, we would have to go away back into his boyhood days, since which time he has been an enthusiastic collector, and he has amassed a collection of foreign stamps numbering about 20,000 specimens. In addition to this he collected U.S. Postage, Revenue, Match, Medicine and entire envelopes.

His is a very large collection, and among this vast number of stamps there are many gems of the first water. His collection is not often exhibited as such accumulations are not easy to handle, but portions of it are occasionally seen, and from these can be judged somewhat of the contents of the whole.

Mr. Clotz's collection is mounted in a Staten Island permanent album, he being one of the men instrumental in placing that best of albums on the market.

The Staten Island Philatelic Society has honored him with the office of treasurer since its formation in 1883, an office which he holds with both honor to himself and credit to the society.

In the organization of the American Philatelic Association, Mr. Clotz was a prime mover, and in the search for good men to hold offices, he was selected as exchange manager this being the most important department in the association. After running that department successfully, he took charge of the International Exchange Department, which office he continues to hold to-day.

He holds the responsible position of Treasurer of numerous societies one of the best known being The Philatelic Society of New York, a society young in years but strong in influence.

Among New York's many collectors, none are more highly esteemed than Mr. Clotz, as his genial ways and liberality regarding things philatelic, place him among the foremost of the metropolitan philatelists.

His name is by no means confined to New York, as he is a member of the Staten Island Philatelic Society, The Philatelic Society, New York, American Philatelic Association, National Philatelic Society, Chicago Philatelic Society, Western Philatelic Union, Canadian Philatelic Society, The Copenhagen and Dresden Societies.

He is a man of fine physique and genial manners, and no one visiting New York City can have seen her prominent collectors unless they have met and talked with Mr. Henry Clotz.

Many of PLAIN TALK's readers will probably be wanting albums and philatelic supplies for the holidays, and a word of advice here will not be amiss. Just before Christmas, stamp dealers are rushed, and it is to your interest to have your order in early, and save a possible disappointment in not getting goods in time.

A new edition (the tenth) of the International Postage Stamp Album will be issued in November, and copies may be seen at any stamp dealers.

It is desired to form a philatelic society among the Michigan collectors, and all interested can obtain full information by addressing A. W. Crittenden, Detroit, Mich.

Mr. Seebeck, of New York, the gentleman who furnishes the South American Republics with postage stamps free, for the privilege of selling the yearly remainders, is a stamp collector. At an auction sale of stamps held in October, he bought a specimen of the Baton Rouge confederate stamp, five cents, on original letter, the letter being postmarked "New Orleans." The price paid for the stamp was fifty dollars.

Some collectors imagine that if a stamp is torn or damaged in any way, it is of no value, but in this they are mistaken. If a stamp is damaged, it of course is not worth as much as a perfect specimen, but if the stamp is rare, worth say two dollars or over it should not be given away because supposed to be of no value. Hardly a sale is held of postage stamps in which there are not damaged specimens, and some catalogued as "badly damaged" I have seen sell as high as five dollars.

At this time of the year it is usual to see the formation of a number of new stamp societies, but the number talked of this year far exceeds any previous year's record. Most of the societies now forming are state affairs, and I fear they will not be able to accomplish much, but the large number of them under way indicates a wide-spread interest in the pursuit.

At the Columbian Exposition to be held at Chicago in 1892-3, there is every prospect of having a display of postage stamps. The American Philatelic Association, the leading society, has appointed a committee to that end, and most of the large local societies have followed suit. Many collectors are willing to loan portions of their collections for exhibition purposes, but the question of insurance against loss or damage is an important one. Few will care to send say five thousand dollars worth of stamps a distance of a thousand miles, without feeling assured that they were protected from the many causes of loss. This point is the first and most important to settle, and when that matter is settled satisfactorily, a fine exhibition of stamps is assured.

The article on "Stamp Collecting, how to collect, from the beginning up," which appeared in the August, September and October issues of this paper, is now ready in pamphlet form, and if any of PLAIN TALK's readers wish a copy either for themselves or a friend, they can obtain it by addressing the editor. It is reported that at least fifty thousand of these pamphlets will be issued by various dealers, with the result of making thousands of new stamp collectors.

Philately in the south is well represented by the *Southern Philatelist*, this paper now appearing in thirty page form. It has every evidence of a large following.

LADIES' DEPARTMENT.

EDITED BY

MRS. N. F. PERKINS, OCEANUS, N. Y.

Christmas Work.

Four Articles for Little Fingers to Make.

DARNING NEEDLE CUSHION.

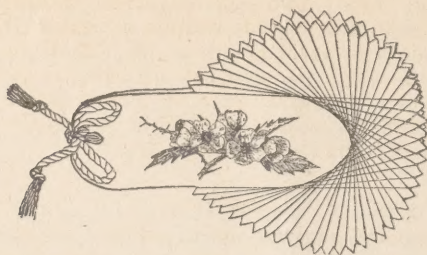
THIS makes such a nice gift for grandma for her darning bag. Take four pieces of dress braid (woolen) five inches long, the brighter the colors the prettier the cushion. Odd pieces left from dress skirts are nice to use. This one is made of blue, red, garnet and gray; the pieces are sewed together in a loose over and over stitch, then the seams are feather-stitched with bright colored silks; fill with cotton, not too full, tie with narrow ribbon, a neat bow just an inch from each end, fringe out ends.

PIN BALL.

CUT two pieces of pasteboard measuring six inches around; cover outside of each piece with dark blue plush, sew together over and over stitch; cross stitch edges with pink embroidery silk, tie with narrow pink ribbon through centre, tie again three inches from top which makes a loop for hanging. Fill with pins, then it is ready for a gift for papa or a big brother.

NEEDLE BOOK.

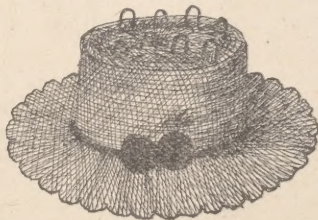
CUT two pieces of plain white bristol board the shape of a small Japanese fan, only make a wider handle; entire case is five inches long, handle is two inches long and one inch wide. Notch edges of fan making forty-six small points, wind embroidery silk on each notch, beginning with bottom notch and winding over to the nineteenth notch,



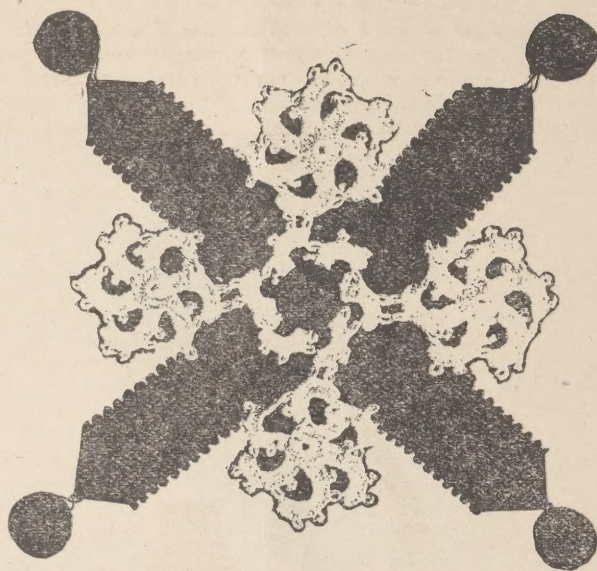
then second to twentieth and so on until all notches are filled. Cut and point three pieces of flannel a trifle smaller than the covers, fasten inside of covers with a silk cord tassel; make cord by twisting twelve strands of the embroidery silk. Paste a small picture on handle of fan and a larger one in centre of fan. This is a nice gift for a big sister.

HAIR PIN RECEIVER.

THIS when finished is in the shape of a hat and is easily made by the small girl who can do plain crocheting. A piece of pasteboard sixteen inches around is covered with any color of silk or woolen goods. Next glue on a pasteboard ribbon block, one about two inches wide, fill with curled hair, then crochet a cover of split zephyr, make a



small circle of twelve long stitches, increase till crown is covered. Make sides of same stitch without widening, then increase for brim, finish brim with a small shell. Make band of a crocheted cord, tie around hat and finish with small red tassels. Sew the crocheted cover to the edge.



WHEEL TIDY.

THIS tidy requires one ball of number forty, Clark's tidy cotton, two-thirds of a yard of yellow moire ribbon about two inches wide, and five yellow plush balls. For crocheting the wheels use a medium coarse steel needle. Chain six fasten, make eighteen trebles, chain nine, turn, make four trebles, chain four and fasten to form a pecot, four trebles, pecot, four trebles, pecot, four trebles, pecot, six trebles, fasten in third stitch of ring, this makes a spoke of wheel, six of these spokes are required for each wheel. Second wheel:—Chain nine, fasten in second pecot of first spoke, turn, four trebles, pecot, four trebles, pecot, four trebles, pecot, four trebles, pecot, six trebles, fasten with long crochet stitch in sixth stitch of ring.

Cut ribbon in two pieces, cross this and fasten by sewing one wheel in centre of ribbon and sew a plush ball in centre of wheel; fasten to centre wheel between ribbon, the other four wheels, also fasten each wheel to edges of ribbon. Sew ribbon ends to make a point and fasten a plush ball to each point.

A THISTLE SACHET.

A DELICATE sachet ball may be made of pale pink silk. Take a small piece of cotton wadding and roll into a ball large enough to hold in the palm of the hand, mix ten cents worth of heliotrope sachet powder into the cotton, cover with pale pink surah silk. Fringe out two yards of



pink ribbon to match surah to make the thistle top; the fringe must be two inches deep; sew this into the cotton ball. Two yards of very narrow pink ribbon is tied twice around to cover stitches made in sewing thistle top to the ball; tie in a double bow to form a bunch of loops.

CALENDAR.

THIS calendar is made of white bristol board and measures seven inches and a half in length and six inches in width. A quarter moon of bright yellow is painted and an owl perched on tip end of moon. Half yard of narrow yellow ribbon is used for loops for hanging. A small calen-



dar about two inches square is glued on to left hand corner about half an inch from edges. Edges of bristol board are notched. This calendar is easily made and costs but little, but the painting must be good to make it effective.

MILK WEED BAG.

MAKE a bag of fine white silk illusion nine inches square, fill with the down from the milk weed pod. These pods may be gathered in the fall any time after the first of October. Gather bag at one end and fasten securely; next gather one end of a piece of illusion nine inches wide and seven inches deep and sew to top of bag. Twelve bright yellow plush balls are sewed on edge of this piece of illusion to make a fringe. A yard of inch wide satin ribbon is made into bows and fastened to top of bag.

BUREAU SCARF.

THIS scarf is made of linen scrim; the scrim is a yard wide, and two yards will make two scarfs wide enough for an ordinary bureau. An inch and a half hem is turned on both sides and ends, four threads are drawn and the hem is made with hemstitching of blue wash silk. Two inches from the hem on each end draw seven threads, leave half an inch space, draw seven more, another half inch space and draw seven more threads, next run half an inch blue satin ribbon in and out every seven threads, in next space use orange and third space blue. Sew ribbons on each side, turning in the ends to form a loop that will extend to edge of hem on both sides. Fine torchon lace about four inches in width is sewed rather full on each end. This scarf is most serviceable, as it may be washed after removing ribbons.

SCRAP BAG.

THIS is a small bag suitable for a bedroom. Take a piece of pasteboard six inches square, cover with canton flannel and over this sew yellow surah silk, sprinkle some sachet powder between flannel and silk cover. Next, with yellow knitting silk make a chain long enough to go around the square just covered, fasten, chain two and fasten with a long crochet stitch into every third stitch on chain. Second row:—Make two, chain and fasten with long stitch in open space between long stitches of first row. Twenty-four rows are made in this way. A shell of six with picot in centre is made to finish top; same sort of shell is made on bottom of

bag as on foundation in chain. This crocheted bag is next sewed to the silk bottom in such a way as to allow the crocheted shell to extend outside of silk bottom. Two rows of narrow yellow ribbon with picot edge is run around top of bag just below finishing shell to make gathering strings and for hanging ribbon. Ribbon knitting silk and surah silk must be of exactly same shade. These bags are pretty made in delicate shades of blue or pink.

CALENDAR.

THIS calendar is made of slate colored bristol board nine inches wide and seven inches long. Cut corners round. A piece of garnet ribbon fourteen inches long and an inch and a half wide is used for the names of the months; for the names of the days use cardinal satin ribbon, and for the date of the month yellow satin. Finish ends of ribbons by pointing, and a tassel to match shade of ribbon. Slots are cut in bristol board just the right size to show one month, name of day and date, and the ribbons are run through the slots. A second piece of bristol board is cut and pasted on to finish back, but must be pasted only on sides so as not to interfere with the ribbons. Names of months should be painted in blue, names of the days in white, and date of the month in yellow. Space for months should be cut about two inches from top and an inch and a half from left side, space for dates cut two inches from bottom and an inch and a half from right side, space for days an equal distance between; these words are to be painted in right hand upper corner: "A year of cheerful yesterdays, of bright to-days and confident to-morrows." AUNT EVA.

A CROCHETED BASKET.

THIS basket is made of number twenty Clark's tidy cotton. Use a coarse steel needle. Crochet bottom just like any round mat of plain crochet stitch, making it five inches in diameter; next make a piece of trimming in the common macrame tidy pattern about four inches wide and long enough to go around outside of bottom; finish with a small scallop. Whip two ends together, making it round, then whip the bottom edge to bottom of basket. Now fit it over a tin pail or a flower pot, take an old toothbrush, dip it in strong gum arabic water and go all over the basket, making it very stiff; dry the basket and then varnish it. After it is thoroughly dry again, run bright red ribbon through the middle loops and tie in a large bow.

Dress Notes.

Dainty narrow edgings as an outline above the hems will still be worn. The narrowest jet edgings are simply two rows of jet beads.

A bride's going-away dress is of dahlia-faced cloth, trimmed with yards upon yards of elegant crocheted passementerie. The skirt is bell-shaped, slightly touching the floor, the bias back seam being concealed by the fan plaits. The front and sides appear to be one piece, and are smoothly drawn back. The bottom of the skirt is trimmed with three rows of crocheted trimmings.

A handsome evening hat is described as having a brim of fancy black straw, with an openwork crown made of jet nail-heads strung on wire. It is trimmed with yellow velvet and black wings of velvet.

The new "Paul Jones," or triangular-shaped hat, is very picturesque when worn by a youthful person; but it is a caricature when attempted by advanced ladies.

Turbans and walking-hats still retain favor for utility, and are simply trimmed. A veil should always be worn with these to modify their severity.—*Delineator*.

WHAT is known as the sharp-pointed Spanish bang is very much in vogue, but it must be remembered that the hair must grow in this way for it cannot be cut in this shape or trained to it.

ONE of the most curious rings seen lately is of aluminum with a very dark ruby set in it. The ring looks almost black, and it is only at night that the stone is at its best, and impresses one with its great beauty.—*L. H. Journal*.

THE American Archæological Association.

President, A. F. BERLIN, Allentown, Pa.
Vice-President, Dr. D. S. MCARTHUR, Lacrosse, Wis.
Secretary, A. B. FARNHAM, Bannings, D. C.
Treasurer, E. J. SHERIDAN, 295 Adelphi Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.
Librarian, CHAS. A. PERKINS, Wakefield, Mass.
Exchange Superintendent, J. R. NISSLEY, Ada, Ohio.
Counterfeit Detector,
Board of Trustees, JOS. WIGGLESWORTH, Wilmington, Del.; E. J. ROCKWOOD,
 10 Coral Street, Worcester, Mass.; G. L. FANCHER, West Winsted, Conn.

Secretary's Report.

I TAKE pleasure in reporting the following:

NEW MEMBERS.

Wm. Van Bergen, 89 Court St., Boston, Mass.
 Chas. A. Hunt, 233 Shelby Ave., East Nashville, Tenn.

APPLICATIONS.

John Tremain, 1013 Lincoln St., Elmira; N. Y.
 References: O. D. Elmore, 1055 Walnut st, Elmira, N. Y.; George Walker, 1046 Walnut St., Elmira, N. Y.
 Harry Gasper, 1051 Walnut St., Elmira, N. Y.
 References: G. W. Tremain, 1013 Lincoln St., Elmira, N. Y.; J. C. Westervelt, 1006 Walnut St., Elmira, N. Y.

We are indebted to Mr. Tremain for both of the above applications.

I hope the Treasurer will soon give a report of his department, as it should be heard from and unless he is able to perform the duties of his office a substitute should be appointed for the Association's business is greatly retarded by such inaction.

A. B. FARNHAM, *Secretary*.

Librarian's Report.

MATTERS in my department have been very quiet for the last few months, in fact with the exception of some papers from Mr. W. K. Moorehead, I have received nothing, and for that reason, and not for lack of interest, I have made no report. Mr. Moorehead seems to be meeting with great success in his efforts. In one mound in Ohio, he recently took out in one day 1900 flint disc and leaf shaped implements, and from the same mound 7,232 pieces were taken, making a pile 12 feet long, 3 feet high and 4 feet through.

It is expected that the Archæological exhibit at Chicago in 1893, will be one of the finest and most complete ever attempted. Prof. F. W. Putnam of Cambridge, has charge of that department, and he has invited many of the private collectors to assist him, by contributing specimens from their collections. I am pleased to see so many new names being sent in for membership, and also the articles from time to time by new writers.

CHAS. H. PERKINS, *Librarian*.

A Good Find.

THINKING the readers of PLAIN TALK, or at least those interested in Archæology, would like to hear something about the stone relics we find here in Indiana, I write you about a "Cache" of "Flints" I have in my large collection, and which were found in this (Boone) County in digging a post hole. They were about twenty inches from the surface and there were about one hundred in the lot as near as I can tell, as about twenty of them were badly broken before the man, (who was digging in the hole) found what he had struck. There remains now about eighty whole ones and they are a fine lot, measuring from three and three-quarters to six inches in length. Many of them measure five inches in length and they will probably average four and a half in length by one and three-quarter inches in width. They are all double-pointed and resemble spear-heads more than any other flint implement. When this lot was purchased they were sticking around a flower-bed, being put to that use by the wife of the farmer who found them. I also have six pieces (perfect) out of another "Cache" found in an adjoining county by my cousin in 1877. This lot contained fifty-two pieces, measuring from five to seven inches in length, and three and one-half to four and one-half in width. They were also double-pointed and made of blue flint: (as was the first mentioned lot, which were found in May of this year.) I would like to hear from some of our advanced collectors on similar "finds" of these implements, and hear

their opinion about this class of relics, whether they are finished implements or not, and if so what they were used for. Collectors let us have your opinions.

C. E. TRIBBETT, *Thorntown, Ind.*

A Rare Find.

I HAVE in my possession for a short time a specimen found near this town a few days ago. It was a surface find and its general appearance is like its type a pointed ceremonial ax or banner stone three and three-quarter inches long by two inches across where drilled very prominent over hole and dressed down thin and flat at each end. But the surface on both sides are covered with etchings representing animals, birds, fishes, men, bows and arrows, new moon, the sun, as represented with two circles and star edge, pipes, tomahawks, buffalo, turtle, "turkey tracks," an open hand, etc., a true animal and very unique we take them to be a mink and a bear, and diverse other characters but not representing letters or figures. The stone is genuine and authentic, and has seen a great deal of use judging from its worn appearance. Who can decipher these characters? It is open for inspection by advanced archæologists and should be in the hands of some one that could read such illustrated language. The party that owns it would part with it for a reasonable price but no nominal sum would reach it. It is an enigma that should be unravelled as it might throw some light on the obscure data of our predecessors.

G. E. MCKOWN, *Cardington, Ohio.*

The American Numismatic Association.

President, WILLIAM G. JERREMS, JR., Chicago, Illinois.
Vice President, JOSEPH HOOPER, Port Hope, Ontario.
Secretary, CHARLES T. TATMAN, Worcester, Massachusetts.
Treasurer, DAVID HARLOWE, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
Librarian, SAMUEL H. CHAPMAN, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
Superintendent of Exchange, GEORGE W. RODE, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.
Counterfeit Director, ED. FROSSARD, New York City, New York.
Board of Trustees: W. KELLEY HALL, Peterborough, Ontario; C. W. STUTESMAN, Bunker Hill, Indiana; J. A. HECKELMAN, Cullom, Illinois; JOHN F. JONES, Jamestown, New York; HENRY E. DEATS, Flemington, New Jersey.

Communications intended for this department should be sent to C. T. TATMAN
 93 Piedmont Street, Worcester, Mass.

Official Organ of the A. N. A.

PRESIDENT JERREMS appointed the following committee on official organ: Messrs. Heath, Tatman and Grenny. The seventh by-law of the association reads as follows:

"It shall be the duty of the Committee on Official Journal to make such provision for the publication of the proceedings of the Association as they may think advisable for the best interests of the association."

The committee has made a unanimous report as given below:

NOVEMBER 12, 1891.

To the Secretary of the A. N. A.:—

As provided in by-law 7 of our Constitution and By-Laws, the Committee on Official Organ would respectfully report and recommend as follows:—

1. That PLAIN TALK be our official organ for the ensuing year.

2. That PLAIN TALK and *The Numismatist* be delivered at the expense of the Association to each member thereof, gratis, who has paid his annual dues; these papers to be furnished at half rates as agreed upon between the publishers of said papers and your committee.

3. That bills for the payment of said subscriptions be drawn every three or six months upon the treasurer of the Association as provided in the constitution and by-laws.

GEO. F. HEATH,
 C. T. TATMAN,
 F. J. GRENNY, } Committee.

The above action, taken in pursuance of authority conferred by the Chicago convention settles the business of official organ for the coming year. The subscription to PLAIN TALK includes the exchange privilege and is regularly sold at \$1.00. The price of *The Numismatist* is fifty cents per year. The A. N. A. furnishes membership, and subscription to both papers for \$1.00 per annum.

The Constitution and By-Laws of the A. N. A. will be issued in pamphlet form very soon.



DR. GEO. F. HEATH.

CICERO claimed for himself the title of "*pater patriæ*," the proud name of "Father of his Country" was bestowed upon Washington by adoring millions; and the coin collectors of the United States have termed Dr. Heath "Father of the American Numismatic Association." The parents of Ruth Cleveland may be proud of their lusty child, but they have no more right to boast than our friend Heath. He was first to publicly suggest the organization of the A. N. A.; and ever since, he has been foremost in its advancement.

George Francis Heath, whose portrait we are privileged to present in this issue, was born at Warsaw, N. Y., September 20, 1850. His grandparents were among the first settlers of Wyoming County, and his earlier ancestors were New Englanders. In 1860 his mother died, and the Union Army claimed the services of his father, so that our youngster was obliged to go and live with his uncle at Poultney Vt.

In 1870 he took Horace Greely's famous advice, and going west, settled in Warrensburg, Mo., entering the High School there, and later attending the State Normal School. Heath in 1872 took charge of the post office at Warrensburg, in which position he remained till 1876, at that time taking up the drug business. In that year he was also elected alderman by Warrensburg, and in that office served the city four years. Then he entered the medical department of the University of Michigan, graduating in 1881, having been president of his class both years.

Dr. Heath now became resident physician of the State Hospital at Ann Arbor. In 1884 he removed to Monroe, where he has ever since been engaged in the practice of medicine. He is division surgeon for the M. C. R. R. between Detroit and Toledo. He has two children—a boy six years old and a girl of sixteen months.

In the spring of 1890 the republican party nominated Dr. Heath to the mayoralty of the city of Monroe, and triumphantly placed him in the mayor's chair even in that democratic city. The people of Monroe are very sensible.

The doctor commenced collecting coins in 1863. Ten years later his collection was ruined by fire, but he immediately started in again and now has about 6,000 pieces. He also gathers stamps, autographs, minerals and Indian relics. Numismatics is his pet hobby and fishing his favorite diversion.

Our friend says he has fished in everything east of the Rocky Mountains, is not prone to fish stories, but his "luck has been that the biggest fish always got away." In that respect he is singularly like the writer. The only lake trout I ever caught simply came up long enough to say good-bye. Dr. Heath expects to hunt coins and fish as long as he lives, and to live long. Thereby he manages to keep healthy and good-natured. In personality Dr. Heath is quite striking, lacking but half an inch of six feet in height and weighing 225 pounds.

The doctor publishes the monthly coin journal entitled *The Numismatist*. In the February number of that paper, out about the middle of that month, he asked the question, "Why should there not be an American Numismatic Association?" About two weeks later PLAIN TALK came out with the same query. Both papers then hustled for the organization, and under the management of Dr. George F. Heath, the A. N. A. has been put upon its feet. The modest gentleman might have been permanent president if he had wished but stepped aside and urged Mr. Jerrems to accept the position. May the Association continue to have such able and wise leaders.

A Card.

To the Secretary of the A. N. A.:—

PLEASE convey my thanks to the members of the A. N. A. for the honor conferred by my election as Vice-President. Any services I can render the Association will be willingly and cheerfully given.

Respectfully and Fraternally Yours,
JOSEPH HOOPER.

Dues.

THE Treasurer is now prepared to give receipts for dues to all members forwarding the necessary silver certificate for one dollar. Address: DAVID HARLOWE, 28 Mitchell Building, Milwaukee, Wis.

Applications for Membership.

THE Constitution states that every application must be in writing, directed to the Secretary, and the applicant's paper must be signed by two members of the association as sponsors. The following persons have made formal applications for membership:

S. C. Stevens, 89 Dearborn St., Chicago, Ills.
L. C. Whitney, 687 Marshall St., Milwaukee, Wis.
B. P. Wright, M. D., 1609 W. Genesee St., Syracuse, N. Y.
Alden J. Bennett, Virginia City, Montana.
Erwin G. Ward, Palmer, Mass.
Horatio R. Storer, A. M., M. D., Newport, R. I.
M. Steffan, Memphis, Mo.

If no objection to any of these candidates is received by the secretary before January 1, certificates of membership will be issued. Any objections will be considered by the Trustees.

Persons wishing for application blanks may obtain them from any of the officers or from Dr. Geo. F. Heath, of Monroe, Mich. The red tape of admission is very much strung out, but is not very formidable. The annual dues of the A. N. A. are \$1.00. Persons using the exchange department must give bonds for \$200.

The Association was organized for the benefit of all active coin collectors whether amateur or advanced. It is to be a society of progress. All numismatists who care much for their hobby ought to rally to the support of the A. N. A. We have had a marvelously successful start; let the good work go on.

Mr. Rode's Acceptance.

To the Secretary of the A. N. A.:—

YOUR letter of the 13th of October, advising me of my election as Superintendent of Exchange, was duly received. I fully appreciate the honor, and trust I shall be able to discharge my duties to the satisfaction of all. Please request the Trustees to prepare bond for my signature. As soon as bond has been approved I will arrange to put the department in working order.

Yours truly,

GEO. W. RODE.

49 Fifth Ave., Pittsburg, Pa., Nov. 10, 1891.

BY reason of a mistake, one name was incorrectly omitted from the list of charter members. This completes the roll of organizers: 61. Herbert E. Morey, 31 Exchange St., Boston, Mass.

• • PLAIN TALK • •

PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT
No. 5 BEEKMAN STREET, NEW YORK,

BY
PLAIN TALK PUBLISHING COMPANY
(INCORPORATED.)

The EXCHANGE and MART of Boston, and the STAMP WORLD and HUBBARD'S MAGAZINE of Lake Village, N. H. have been combined with this paper.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

IN ADVANCE.

Per Annum, 50 Cents. | Six Months, 25 Cents.
To Foreign Countries, 75 cents per annum.

The above rates apply to subscriptions, pure and simple; if the privilege of the Exchange and Sale Department is desired the price is \$1.00 per year—i. e., 50 cents in addition to the regular subscription. See also notice at head of that department.

PLAIN TALK will be stopped at expiration of subscription when the publishers are so requested, but unless so requested it will not be stopped. Subscribers will please note this fact. We have no desire to force the paper upon its readers, and a simple request to stop will be all that is necessary, but unless this request is received it will be continued.

ADVERTISING RATES.

Per line per insertion, 10 cents; per inch, \$1.00; per column, \$8.00. Space less than one column must be paid at inch rates; less than one inch at line rates. Ten per cent. discount for six months; 20 per cent. for one year. Rates invariable and all advertisements subject to approval.

The names of all Subscribers are registered as soon as received and papers and premiums are always promptly forwarded.

Address all subscriptions and business communications to the publisher; all MSS. and matter intended for publication, to the editor.

Full name and address must accompany all MSS., not necessarily for publication but as an indication of good faith. Anonymous communications will be consigned to the waste-paper basket. No MSS. returned unless the necessary postage stamps accompany the same.

Remittances made by Bank Draft, Money Order, Express Order, or Registered Letter will be at our risk. Money sent in any other manner will be at sender's risk.

Checks on country banks cannot be accepted owing to the cost of collecting same. Subscribers who want their address changed must give old as well as new address. A blue mark around this paragraph signifies that your subscription expires with this issue. A prompt renewal will be appreciated.

Entered as second-class matter at the New York, N. Y., Post Office.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER, 1891.

EDITED BY F. H. PALMER.

YOUR attention is called to our premium offers in this issue. We have been to considerable expense of time and money to get out offers which will be appreciated. The seeds we offer are all tested and warranted; the Gem Panel Photographs are made by an artist who understands his profession; get a sample and judge for yourself. The views of foreign countries we offer are sold elsewhere for \$1.50 per dozen and are real works of art. In short all our offers are good. If they are not just as represented return them and get your money.

Editorial Greeting.

WITH this number a new editor takes charge of PLAIN TALK. He realizes that it is not always pleasant to give up old friends and make new. He recognizes the signal ability, affability, and universal popularity of the retiring editor; he rejoices that he himself is to enjoy, with all readers of PLAIN TALK, the continued help and co-operation of its old editor. He hopes that the mantle so honorably worn by him, may fall upon his successor; and that an abundant success may continue to crown the efforts of PLAIN TALK to furnish healthful, pleasant, stimulating reading matter to its thousands of readers young and old.

The several departments of PLAIN TALK will be continued as heretofore, and new features will be added from time to time. Let all our readers feel a personal interest in making the paper the very best of its kind in the country, and we may be sure of a place, to speak modestly, near the top. The Editor will be glad to receive all sorts of contributions and all sorts of inquiries from all its subscribers and will do his best to deal impartially, wisely and kindly with all. Co-operation is a popular principle in the age in which we live; a paper for young people is a good place for the principle of co-operation. Let our motto be "All for the good of all."

Our Christmas number presents unusual attractions, and with it we send Christmas greetings to all our friends.

Plain Talks.

BY REV. F. H. PALMER.

V.

ON SMOKING AND DRINKING.

OUR consideration of the general subject of habit, in our last PLAIN TALK, prepares the way for a few words about some specific bad habits into which young people are apt to fall. Among the most noticeable of these are the tobacco and alcohol habits; I class them together because they so often go together in point of fact. Not always; I know that there are many smokers who do not drink, but the tendency of the one habit is to create the other. There are few habitual drunkards who do not smoke. It is safe to say that if you should take at random a thousand men and divide them into two bands according as they did or did not use tobacco, from 75 to 90 per cent of the drinking men of that thousand would be in the tobacco-using band. Now let us, as young people, candidly and intelligently canvas the question whether it will pay for us to form either habit, or to continue it if already formed? I am sure that a large portion of the readers of PLAIN TALK want to follow their reason wherever it manifestly leads them; they want to do what is really right and best if they can only find out certainly what that is. The writer of these plain talks only desires to help his young friends discover what that right and best thing really is; he does not want merely to air a pious theory, or establish his personal prejudice; he makes no sweeping statements or general condemnations. He has known some few good, able, healthy men who lived to a great age, who used tobacco, and even alcohol, nearly all their lives. He used the former himself at one time, but was induced in early manhood, before the habit had become firmly fixed, to sit down and earnestly count the cost. Ever since, thought and observation have invariably confirmed the reasons which he was obliged in all sincerity, to give to himself for not using either. He would like to be corrected if he was mistaken, but if not, he would like to induce others to think these questions out for themselves along the same lines, and then to act as they may think.

In the first place, then, no real good, sound, positive reason can be given why we *should* use either tobacco or alcohol habitually. In many frank talks with smokers and drinkers I have never been able to get a statement of more than two or three reasons for either habit, and these have invariably been of the lowest and poorest kind when carefully scrutinized. The most commonly given reason is that it is a *pleasure* to smoke or drink, but this pleasure is confessedly a sensual or animal pleasure merely, and at best is a kind of sense-excitement that cannot compare either in dignity or exquisiteness with some other kinds of bodily enjoyment. Compare the physical pleasure which a smoker gets in sitting in a closed room and tickling his mucous and nervous systems by the hour with the poisonous nicotine stimulant, with that of the equestrian or the yachtsman who glides along under God's blue heavens in the fresh air, with all his physical faculties in a positively healthful environment. He is stimulated naturally and harmoniously, and at the same time he is enjoying the exquisite sense of mastery, which is the result of the mind's action in shaping, directing and using for an intelligent purpose the forces of nature wrapped up in the brute animal that is ridden or in the laws of wind and wave that carry his swift yacht to its destination.

Merely regarded from the physical standpoint, the smoker's or drinker's pleasure is of the lowest possible kind.

It is not necessary to choose between enjoying one's self in this way and not enjoying one's self at all. Physical enjoyment is good and desirable, but let us be sure that ours is of the best and highest kind we are capable of, for the lower kinds soon degenerate into mere animalism, and often prove to be not pleasure at all, but mere deceptive baits to lure us on to misery and harm.

Another reason that has often been given in defence of these habits is that they tend to sociability. No doubt, a very large number of young people have learned to smoke and drink because they wish to be social, and to do as the other fellows did, but we have all known some jolly good social fellows who neither drank nor smoked, but who quietly, and with a manly dignity, said when asked to do so: "Thank you, but I don't indulge." Now one such case disproves the claim that it is a *necessary* to smoke or drink in order to be truly social, and there are thousands of such cases.

We have only space to enumerate, without much elaboration, a few of the reasons against either habit.

First, both tobacco and alcohol contain an active poison in large proportions which cannot be taken into the system habitually without very serious danger of ultimate physical harm. The system has a wonderful power of accommodating itself to all sorts of unhealthful conditions, so that it may for a long time resist the attacks of any poison taken in small quantities, but *ultimately* the deleterious effect is almost sure to manifest itself. Smoking and drinking are undoubtedly among the famous causes of undermined health and enfeebled physical powers in the human race.

Secondly, these habits handicap prosperity, and entail hereditary tendencies of the most dreadful kind.

Thirdly, they are enemies of cleanliness, Godliness and good taste. One smoking-car on our railroad is a sufficient demonstration of this point.

Fourthly, they are very expensive habits. The money spent on them from fifteen to forty years of age by any habitual smoker or drinker would, with interest, make a competence for the remainder of his life.

Dear young people if we honestly weigh these habits in the balance, will they not be found *wanting*?

How Shall We Have Our Christmas Presents?

THIS is a question that is asked in many a household as Christmas approaches. The real enjoyment of the day by old and young, depends largely on the answer. Some families, let us hope they are few in number, do not give presents at all. In some families but little thought is bestowed on the subject of how to give such gifts as are interchanged in the way that will yield the most pleasure. Sometimes it is put to vote, and on the younger ones voting for "a tree" the older ones veto the motion on the ground of its being "too much trouble." The old-fashioned way of "hanging up the stocking" is open to several objections. Many of the presents will not go in; the little folks can hardly sleep, or wake very early from the excitement; there is the danger of taking cold as they move about in the early daylight to empty their socks and admire the contents; and, worst of all the whole family-circle cannot be present to share the joy of the occasion.

The "tree" is a good enjoyable method where it is practicable; but in many houses it is too expensive, and it is a good deal of trouble.

In the writer's family, year after year the vote has finally been carried in favor of "The Christmas Pie," as combining on the whole the most advantages and affording the most long-drawn-out and exquisite pleasure to all members of the family-circle. For the benefit of any who are not posted on the delights of this Christmas the "pie" is here described:

About ten days beforehand a large wash tub or clothes

basket is placed in some side room where none but mamma or some other privileged member of the household is allowed to go. All are informed that the pie is a-making, and many a mysterious package appears peeping out from mamma's sachel, or from papa's coat pockets, or under sister's cloak as the different ones return from down town or the neighboring city. Each package is taken by its buyer and deposited well wrapped and plainly labelled to whom and from whom, in the tub or basket. Packages received in the mail are treated in a similar manner. From time to time mamma, who has charge of "the cooking," sprinkles over the layers of gifts a layer of finely cut strips of paper, the cutting of which will afford the younger members of the family many hours of interested employment for days beforehand, and make them feel that they have had a real share in the joys of the day.

The tub thus gradually fills up. Any present too large to go in can be put away until Christmas morning, and then placed on the floor alongside of the pie just before the cutting. After all is in, a crust is made of brown papertied neatly around the top of the tub, with one three-cornered piece cut as you would cut a piece of pie at the table.

After breakfast or dinner, as may be convenient, all in the house are gathered in the parlor, where the wonderful pie has been deposited. In the writer's family, Bridget is included at the serving, and her hoarse exclamation of surprise and pleasure are not the least pleasant features of the occasion. Each takes his turn at "putting" in his thumb to take out a plumb, which he hands to the person whose name is written upon it. The name of recipient and giver is read aloud, and all give attention while the package is unwrapped and the gift duly admired. Thus all share alike in the pleasure of all, and there is the fullest possible opportunity to enjoy the varying expressions of amazement and ecstasy upon the faces of the little ones.

It is a good plan to include in the pie a few joke or "sold" packages, a few "grinds" on individual peculiarities, though this should always be done carefully so as not to hurt any one's feelings. Let everything be tasteful and joyous, and this way of having our Christmas presents will be found to be one of the very best. Try it.—L. W. P.

Christmas Bells.

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of "Peace on earth, good-will to men."

And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Now roll along
The unbroken song
Of "Peace on earth, good-will to men."

Till ringing, singing, on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime,
Of "Peace on earth, good will to men."

But in despair I bowed my head,—
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
"For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of 'Peace on earth, good-will to men.'"

Then pealed the bells, more loud and deep
"God is not dead; nor doth He sleep!
The Wrong shall fail, the Right prevail,
With 'Peace on earth, good-will to men.'"

CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, had placed in his hands by an East Indian missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma and all Throat and Lung Affections also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility, and all Nervous Complaints. Having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, and desiring to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who wish it, this recipe in German, French or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail, by addressing, with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. NOYES, 820 Powers' Block, Rochester, N. Y.

HOW TO DO IT?

Contributions solicited from bright boys and girls, describing the interesting and ingenious things they know how to make, such as kites, double-runners, traps, picture frames, book-cases and a thousand and one things that only young people know about. A prize book will be sent to the one who sends in the most acceptable contribution to this department each month.

How to Procure, Set up, and Decorate a Christmas Tree.

I ASSUME that you have decided to have a Christmas tree, and that you wish to get it yourself rather than buy it. Go to some farmer who has a pine, spruce or hemlock woodlot (spruce is preferable) and beg or buy permission to cut down one young tree. Measure beforehand the height of your room, and carry your measuring stick with you into the woods. This is an important fact because it is very hard to judge in the woods what is the right sized tree for the parlor. Cut the tree off smoothly just above the roots and trim one or two rings of branches, but not too many, as it will be very pretty and *mysterious* to have some presents hidden away among the low-drooping branches.



Making sure that you have a perfectly straight, smooth saw-cut upon the bottom of the trunk of the tree, nail strongly thereon two crossed strips of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch hard pine, two inches wide and about a foot and a half long, slotted together and into the bottom of the tree trunk. Then get a square or round piece of plank suitable in size and thickness to the height and weight of the tree, and nail the projecting ends of the slotted pieces to the top of it, using strong wire nails, thus making a firm attachment for the tree. The standard should now be nailed or screwed to the floor. Lighted Christmas trees are dangerous things unless their anchorage is very firm and strong.

Having set up the tree, much ingenuity and taste may be shown in its decoration. Candle-holders can be bought at a very low price in any large city; or they can be made of tin or wire and pasteboard. Long strings of popcorn are useful and graceful for decorations; bags of candy made of bright colored lace always please the children. Spangles, icicles, frost and dew, with other things too numerous to

mention, can be obtained ready-made at large fancy stores, and by being carefully handled will answer for several years of use. All should be in charge of one or two responsible members of the family, and the rest should not be allowed to see the tree until the *supreme moment*, when its lighted and radiant glories should be disclosed to the open-eyed and open-mouthed little ones. The presents should be neatly wrapped and plainly labeled, and should not be taken from the tree too rapidly, as all should share in the pleasure of their unwrapping.

A pail of water and a long handled broom or swab should always stand near a lighted Christmas tree, and no candles should be placed in a position where any ladies' drapery can by any possibility be swept into its flame. The dread fire-demon is an unbidden but too frequent visitor at Christmas festivals. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Santa Claus is a pleasing feature and can easily be concocted with fur coat, hat and boots, with the addition of a liberal supply of gray whiskers which can be bought or hired at a theatrical store. Mammas, however, should *explain him* beforehand to the very little folks, lest there should be any unpleasant shock to their nervous system. Thus let the day be one of great joy and gladness to all.

SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF VETERANS.

This department is devoted to the interests and welfare of the Sons of Veterans and Ladies' Aid Societies of the United States of America.

Department of Connecticut Sons of Veterans.

Edited by Rollin T. Toms, Stamford, Conn., (of Camp 49, Connecticut Division, (S. V., U. S. A.) to whom all communications from Connecticut camps should be sent.

THE brisk airs of November are now upon us and every S. of V. should have an inspiration for work, for we must do some good work this winter. Just open your eyes, Brothers, and look at what a field is before you; why there is a chance for each and every one of you to bring in a new member to your Camp if you only will, so boys let us get in some good work this winter and if it is possible double our membership. Are you in it?

Subscribe for PLAIN TALK, it is a great help. There is an agent in every Camp who will be only too glad to receive your name.—R. T. T.

JOHN W. SIMMS CAMP, NO. 49.

Hobbie Post, No. 23, G. A. R. gave their sixth annual fair, October 21-31. It was crowded almost beyond endurance every night, and it was found necessary to hold it over until the 22nd of November.

The fair undoubtedly has been one of the most successful in the history of the Post. The S. of V.'s of Camp 49, and W. R. C. of No. 7 Corps aided the comrades in their work.

The wonderful feats of Prof. Turk and his wife, as a magician and ventriloquist were very amusing to the crowd; together with the glass-blowers and speech making by Corporal Tanner, Dept. Commander, Gov. Buckley and others, it was undoubtedly a big success. In F. C. & L.,

R. T. TOMS, Aid from Camp 49.

NATHAN HALE CAMP, NO. 1.

The first of a series of entertainments by Nathan Hale Camp No. 1, S. of V. was given October 20th. The exercises which lasted for an hour and a half, were musical and literary. Dancing was enjoyed till midnight.

Among those present were Captain B. H. Wooding, Quartermaster and Mrs. A. E. Lincoln, Frank Lathrop and wife, Misses Kate J. and Louise Forster, Misses Comelious and Lillian Snow, Miss Lizzie Fullom, Miss Alice Clark, Lieut. Bert Haman, Corporal Church and Hubbard, James and George Snedeker and Charles Morris. The next one will be the last of November. In F. C. & L.,

JAMES D. HISLOP, New Haven.

WM. HORTON CAMP, NO. 44.

This camp was presented with a complete set of side arms, belt chevron and shoulder straps for commanding officers, by Winter Post, No. 44. Presentation speeches were made by Adjutant Adams and Chaplain Druly, after which Captain and Brothers of Camp responded.

PIECES TO SPEAK.

The editor wishes selections of prose or poetry suitable for declamation or recitation and will give each month one of the "Best Books" to the subscriber who sends in the best selection. It being understood that all received are to be at his disposal. Selections which have not appeared in school speakers are preferred. Remember this prize will be awarded on the 10th of November, and on the 10th of each succeeding month for the present.



[Words in *Italics* should be emphasized. The sign *plus* indicates that the gesture is to be continued to the next number. The gestures are marked to come on emphatic words, and the motion of the hands should correspond with the stress put upon the words. One horizontal line indicates a short pause, two a longer, and three a still longer.]

The Last Hymn.

THE Sabbath day was ending in a village by the sea,
The uttered benediction touched the people tenderly,
And they rose to face the sunset in the glowing, lighted west,
And then hastened to their dwellings for God's blessed boon of rest.

But they looked across the waters, and a storm was raging there;
A fierce spirit moved above them—the spirit of the air,
And it lashed and shook and tore them, till they thundered, groaned and boomed,
And alas for any vessel in their yawning gulfs entombed.

Very anxious were the people on that rocky coast of Wales,
Lest the dawns of coming morrows should be telling awful tales;
When the sea had spent its passion and should cast upon the shore
Bits of wreck and swollen victims as it had done heretofore.

With the rough winds blowing round her, a brave woman strained her eyes,
And she saw along the billows a large vessel fall and rise.
Oh! it did not need a prophet to tell what the end must be,
For no ship could ride in safety, near the shore on such a sea.

Then the pitying people hurried from their homes and thronged the beach;
Oh! for power to cross the waters and the perishing to reach!
Helpless hands were wrung for sorrow, tender hearts grew cold with dread,
And the ship, urged by the tempest, to the fatal rock shore sped.

"She has parted in the middle! Oh, the half of her goes down!
God have mercy. Is heaven far to seek for those who drown?"
Lo! when next the white shocked faces looked with terror on the sea,
Only one last clinging figure on the spar was seen to be.
Nearer the trembling watchers came the wreck, tossed by the wave,
And the man still clung and floated, though no power on earth could save.

"Could we send him a short message? here's a trumpet, shout away!"

'Twas the preacher's hand that took it, and he wondered what to say.

Any memory of his sermon? Firstly? Secondly? Ah no! There was but one thing to utter in the awful hour of woe; So he shouted through the trumpet: "Look to Jesus; can you hear?"

And "Aye, aye, sir" rang the answer o'er the waters loud and clear.

Then they listened. He is singing, "Jesus, lover of my soul!"

And the winds brought back the echo, "While the nearer waters roll."

Strange, indeed, it was to hear his "till the storm of life be past,"

Singing bravely from the waters, Oh! receive my soul at last."

He could have no other refuge! "Hangs my helpless soul on Thee.

Leave, ah leave me not!" The singer dropped at last into the sea.

And the watchers, looking homeward, through their eyes with tears made dim,

Said, "He passed to be with Jesus in the singing of that hymn."

BY MARIANNE FARNINGHAM.

Copied by EMMA L. HAUCK, White Plains, N. Y. and awarded the prize for this month.

Corruption, the cause of the Fall of States.

BY STORY.

THE old world has already revealed to us in its *unsealed* books the beginning and end of all its own marvelous struggles in the cause of *liberty*. *Greece*,—(1) lovely Greece, "the land of scholars and the nurse of arms," where sister republics in fair possessions chanted the praises of liberty and the Gods; *where* and *what* is she?≡ For *two thousand years* (10+) the oppressor has bound her to the earth. Her arts (2) are no more.—The last sad relics of her temples are but the barracks of a ruthless soldiery. The fragments of her columns and her palaces are in the dust, (10+) yet *beautiful* (6) in ruin. She fell *not* when the *mighty* were upon her. Her sons were united at Thermopylae and Marathon; and the tide of her triumph *rolled back* (1) upon the Helle-spont.≡ She was conquered by *her own factions*. (2+) She fell into the hands of *her own people*. (10)≡ The *Man of Macedonia* did not the work of destruction. It was *already* done by her own corruptions, banishments and dissensions.≡

Rome,—(6+) republican Rome,—whose eagles (8+) glared on the rising and setting sun, (10) *where* and *what* is she?≡ The eternal city yet (2) remains, *proud* even in her desolation, *noble* in her decline, *venerable* in the majesty of religion, and calm (10) as in the composure of death.≡ The *malaria* (3) has but traveled in the paths worn by her destroyers.≡ More than eighteen centuries have mourned over the loss of her empire. A *mortal disease* was upon her vitals before Cæsar had crossed the Rubicon; and Brutus did not restore her health by the deep probings (9) of the senate chamber. The Goths and Vandals and Huns,—the swarms of the North, *completed* only what was already begun *at home*. *Romans* (4) betrayed *Rome*.≡ The *legions* were bought (10) and sold. But the *people* offered the tribute money.

This is the Way to Do it.

YOU take six pieces of paper; place three of them on the back of your hand, and, as a preliminary operation, blow them away with an air of great mystery, informing your audience at the same time that you are about to explain to them some new kind of magnetism. Then, placing the other three pieces on your hand, you say—"Which of the three pieces do the company desire shall remain on my hand when I blow on them?" When one has been selected, you place the forefinger of your other hand upon it and blow the other pieces away. The absurdity of this mode of solving the problem is sure to create much amusement.

NATURAL HISTORY.

Contributions to this department are solicited from all readers. Questions will be answered by competent authorities.

A Girl's View of Natural History Collections.

[By Lilla Sickler.]

MY experience as a collector in the school of Natural History, dates back to the collection of butterflies. I saw on exhibition a framed piece of butterflies, that was indeed a beautiful picture, and I resolved to get me a collection and arrange as nearly like that exhibit as possible.

I enlisted the aid of my two little brothers, and the very first day found them chasing wildly around my flower garden, squashing their hats over my choicest blooms, and yelling like wild "No! I didn't catch him." "There he goes now! O, pshaw he flew too high." "Throw your hat up at him, and I will watch where he goes," etc. In vain I called for them to stop. "Why this garden is just a looly for butterflies" they cried, and pretty soon they came in with a great yellow and black one, so I felt somewhat mollified.

While I was eating dinner I heard such a buzz! buzz! and would you believe it? those horrid boys had stuck a pin through the poor thing to fasten it to the wall, and said they *had* to, so it would die with its wings spread. As I could not stand that I let the poor thing go. I then got a paste-board box and we put them in that, but they fluttered so, they got all the pretty down off their wings; and it seemed so cruel to let them starve to death, so I finally gave up that collection though I read afterwards in one of Louisa M. Alcott's books that they could be killed by putting a few drops of spirits of camphor on their heads. The boys said it was all on account of the death's head moth, for they brought in a butterfly colored to look exactly like a skull and cross-bones, and told me it was awful bad luck to have one in the house, and that some one was sure to die, but I didn't believe them. That was several years ago and we are all here.

The boys got up a collection of bugs and it was wonderful how many kinds they found, but I was awfully afraid of them. One day in turning over a rock, the boys found a centipede; then father put a stop to their collection in that direction.

The boys next turned their attention to birds. They were not to kill them however, just try to raise and tame the wild birds. This brought the natural history book into constant use trying to discover the habits of birds, but especially to find out their names and what to feed them. I sigh even now to think of the many beautiful birds sacrificed in this vain attempt at taming. One was of a glowing orange plumage with black head, and he seemed attracted by his reflection on the window pane and would peck at it every day, so one morning I bethought me of the looking-glass, and hung it against the window, letting the sash down a little from the top. The mirror inclined a little so birdie got in between the window-pane and the glass and was easily caught. We put him in a cage and hung it on the branch of a tree, with the glass against it so he would have company; but when we looked in the cage several hours later he lay dead.

Then we had a lovely blue bird with brown throat, that would whistle at night. We kept him six months, but he escaped one day when I was cleaning his cage. Strange to say, about three months later the boys found a dead bird *just like it*. I found a nest with some young, and I put the nest in a cage, close by. The mother went in and hovered her brood, but in the morning they were still hovered by a *dead* mother. I will never forget the sad sight.

The boys caught some beautiful birds by taking them from nests when just ready to fly, but they all died. If the boys understood taxidermy we would have a collection of beautiful birds; but it is as well they do not, for if they did, numbers would perish by their "nigger shooters."

The boys are in all the dignity of "long pants" and consult "authorities," and have converted my stand-drawers into a mammoth nest, cotton-lined and sectioned, for the receptacle of bird's eggs—the latest hobby.

I can't climb trees to get eggs, but if you see this in print you will know that I have found a way for girls to collect eggs, and won't I surprise the boys with what they will call "a dandy Christmas present."


The Cat's Whiskers.

THE long hairs on the side of the cat's face are organs of touch. They are attached to a bed of fine glands under the skin, and each of these long hairs is connected with the nerves of the lip. The slightest contact of these whiskers with any surrounding object is thus felt most distinctly by the animal, although the hairs themselves are insensible. They stand out on each side of the lion as well as on the common cat. From point to point they are equal to the width of the animal's body.

If we imagine, therefore, a lion stealing through a covert of wood in an imperfect light we shall at once see the use of these long hairs. They indicate to him through the nicest feeling, any obstacle which may present itself to the passage of his body; they prevent the rustling of boughs and leaves which would give warning to his prey if he were to attempt to pass too close to a bush, and thus, in conjunction with the soft cushions of his feet and the fur upon which he treads—his claws never coming in contact with the ground—they enable him to move toward his victim with a stillness even greater than that of the snake, which creeps along the grass and is not perceived until it is coiled around its prey. Is this evolution or design?

The Christmas Goose.

THE custom of having a goose for Christmas dinner is coming to be as general and as popular as the Thanksgiving turkey. Here are a few facts about the origin of this delightful bird:

It is descended from the "Canada Goose" (*Bernicla Canadensis*) or common wild goose. What a charm there is in the wild honk-honk, honk-honk, honk-honk of this queen of birds, as a great  shaped flock goes sailing over, late in the fall, in the annual migration. Sometimes just before or during a heavy snowstorm a flock, overtaken by night or wearied by battling with the storm will "lose their head," and flying aimlessly about at the height of a few yards will settle in some stream or inland pond, a special God-send to numerous gunners. A large, strong gander usually heads the flock, and they fly without resting many hundred miles.

Dr. Hayden states that this bird breeds on the Yellowstone, and Dr. Cones found it breeding in North Carolina. In the former region it was seen breeding in trees.

Dr. Cones says: "This fact of arboreal nidification is probably little known, and might even be doubted by some; but although I have not myself seen the nests in the trees, I am perfectly satisfied of the reliability of the accounts furnished me by several persons, among whom I may mention Mr. Stevenson, of Dr. Hayden's party. While I was in Montana I found the circumstance to be a matter of common information among residents, who expressed surprise that it was not generally known. The birds are said to build in the heavy timber along the large streams, and to transport their young in their bills to the water.

This corresponds to the habit of the wood-duck, while it is parallel to the example of the herring-gull, which, according to Audubon, has been seen breeding in communities in trees, though ordinarily it breeds on the ground."

The wild goose has been bred up and changed into the ordinary domestic goose by careful selection, the white color being bred more and more forward, as white feathers are more marketable than colored. And by the process something nice has been obtained for the Christmas dinner. In northern countries the wild goose is buried in the earth for a few hours before cooking to take out the strong flavor, but in the young specimens of the tame goose a good cooking in grandmother's kitchen is sufficient.

IN the July number of PLAIN TALK, I noticed an article on the shrike or "Butcher Bird" in which the author stated that they never layed in the same nest twice.

This is a mistake for I have known them to lay twice and even three times in the same nest. On May 16, I found a nest in an oak tree about fifteen feet from the ground, from which I took four eggs. On May 25, I took three more from the same nest, and about June 10, another set of two. The first two sets were perfectly fresh.

GEO. A. K., Odessa, Mo.

The American Silkworm.

[By S. E. K. Moosup Valley, R. I.]

ON the evening of May 6, I found two specimens, male and female, of the beautiful polyphemus moth. I placed them under a wire screen and found upon going to them an hour later that the female was laying eggs. In the morning the under side of the screen was covered with eggs in clusters of from three to six. These were about the size of a pin-head, light brown in color with a white spot upon one side.

About two weeks later I went to the screen and found fuzzy yellow caterpillars crawling everywhere. The worm when first hatched is said to weigh only one twentieth of a grain, but eats so voraciously that in the fifty-six days required to mature, it has consumed three-fourths of a pound of leaves, and becomes one of our largest caterpillars.

When at liberty, the moth usually lays her eggs upon the under side of oak leaves, though sometimes those of elm and other trees are chosen. This is said to be the only native silkworm whose product may be utilized. It is bright green in color, with hairy tubercles extending down its body. Before the last skin is shed, the worm begins to weave its silken prison which is protected upon the outside by leaves; here it remains for nine months. When ready to emerge it secretes an acid which, acting upon the silken threads causes them to give away, and the beautiful moth frees itself without breaking a single thread. The cocoon will be found to be moist inside, containing nothing but the cast-off skin of the pupa.

This insect called by scientists *attacus polyphemus*, is one of our finest moths. It is about six inches across the wings; its color is a yellowish brown. The upper wings have each a round transparent spot, surrounded by a ring of yellow enclosed in one of black. The lower wings have each a large bluish-black spot extending upward, and enclosing another of these transparent ones. Across the upper edge of wings and front of thorax is a grayish band. The antennæ of the male is large and feather-like, a very prominent feature.

How to Handle Guns.

HAVING been asked by friends frequently for advice for their boys in handling guns, I send you a digest of same.

1. Empty or loaded, never point a gun toward yourself or any other person.
2. When a-field carry your gun at the half-cock. If in cover, let your hand shield the hammers from whipping twigs.
3. When riding from one shooting ground to another, or whenever you have your gun in any conveyance, remove the cartridges if a breech-loader, it being so easy to replace them. If a muzzle-loader, remove the caps, brush off the nipples, and place a wad on nipple, letting down the hammers on wads,—simply removing caps sometimes to leave a little fulminate on the nipple, and a blow on the hammer when down discharges it.
4. Never draw a gun to you by the barrels.

More care is necessary in the use of a gun in a boat than elsewhere; the limited space, confined action, and uncertain motion making it dangerous at the best. If possible no more than two persons should occupy a boat. Hammerless guns are a constant danger to persons boating.

6 Always clean your gun thoroughly as soon as you return from a day's sport, no matter how tired you feel; the consequence of its always being ready for service is ample return for the few minutes' irksome labor.—*Georgetown Advocate*.

Toads.

A RECENT article in the *Washington Star* quotes F. H. Lucas, Osteologist and Curator of Comparative Anatomy in the Smithsonian Institution, as saying that toads were a grade above frogs because they did not lay eggs but produce living young.

All the authorities which I have read, state that toads do lay eggs. How is this?

A. B. FARNHAM.

The Angelus Bird.

When traveling in the forests of Guiana and Paraguay, it is not uncommon to meet with a bird whose music greatly resembles that of an Angelus bell when heard from a distance. The Spaniards call this singular bird a bellringer, though it may be more appropriately designated as the Angelus bird, for, like the Angelus bell, it is heard three times a day, morning, noon and night. Its song which defies all description, consists of sounds like the strokes of a bell, succeeding one another every two or three minutes, so clearly and in such a resonant manner, that the listener, if a stranger, imagines himself to be near a chapel or convent. But it turns out that the forest is the chapel, and the bell a bird.

The beauty of the Angelus bird is equal to his talent; he is as large as a jay, and as white as snow, besides being graceful in form and swift in motion. But the most curious ornament of the Angelus bird is the tuft of black arched feathers on its beautiful head; it is of conical shape and about four inches in length.—*Guardian Angel*.

Turkey Buzzard.

THE common Turkey Buzzard or Vulture inhabits all of this country from Patagonia to British America. In this state it is protected by law. Every farmer knows it to be a desirable neighbor, for it devours at all times, putrid or decomposed flesh of carcasses. By this means alone, it manages to live. It seldom alights on growing trees, but always on snags or fence-stakes.

Flocks of them can be seen circling through the air in places where they smell food; they also flock to the same place to roost.

The nest is usually placed in hollow logs or in hollow trunks of trees, but it is sometimes placed on the bare ground under bushes. I know a very large sycamore snag, about twenty feet high, in the hollow of which, each spring, is a buzzard's nest. The eggs, two in number, are of a creamy-white or bluish color, plentifully blotched with brown. In this state they are laid in April or May.

The Turkey Buzzard possesses a keen sense of smell by which it can distinguish the odor of flesh at an immense distance. Its flight, apparently without effort is truly wonderful and beautiful. It is a very silent bird, only uttering a guttural sound while flying, or a hiss at its companions while feeding. This, and the throwing up of the contents of its stomach are about the only means of offence and defence it seems to possess.

The outer feathers are of a brownish color, but next to the skin is a soft white down. The feathers of young buzzards are white. Its head and neck are bare, but at the base of the neck is a ruff of downy feathers into which it draws its head at will.

As far as I know, the above species of vulture (*Cathartes Aura*) is the only species which inhabits this state except an occasional Carrion Crow or Black Vulture.

W.F.P., St. Jacobs, Madison Co., Ills.

Another Parrot Story.

"CRUMBS swept up" has contained a good parrot story or two, and we add another:

Some time ago a captain, who had been on a long voyage, brought home a parrot. The parrot, who had been with him, had learned some of the sayings of the sailors. One evening the captain invited a friend to supper, and began talking about where he had been, to which the parrot replied:

"That's a lie!"

The captain was rather cross at this, so he covered the cage over. He still kept on with the conversation, and the parrot again remarked:

"What a lie!"

This so enraged the captain that he seized a jug of water and threw it over the parrot, and the bird screamed:

"All hands on deck, another thunderstorm!"

DEAR SIR:

I have received numerous orders and inquiries from advertisers and as far as I can trace them your paper shows up better than any other. Very truly, FLETCHER M. NOE.

GAMES AND PASTIMES.

The editor of PLAIN TALK would be glad to receive brief descriptions of good games that have actually been tried by the readers, and found instructive and interesting, either for in-doors or out-of-doors.

A Few Parlor Games.

THE long winter evenings are upon us, and many a pleasant gathering will there be of the readers of PLAIN TALK around the evening fireside, in church sociables and at neighborhood or birthday parties. On such occasions a few good games break up any tendency to stiffness, scatter the "wall-flowers," and sharpen the wits of all the company, sending them home in good humor, rested and better fitted for next day's "sober realities" of life. A few such games are here described by one who has tried them and knows them to be good.

I.

THE GEOGRAPHY GAME.

Two captains are selected who take turns in choosing different members of the company to be on their side, until all are chosen: As each person is chosen he goes over to that part of the room where his captain is stationed. An umpire is now selected. He takes his place between the two bands, who are gathered as closely as possible about their respective captains. When all is ready the umpire begins to count, neither very slowly or very fast. Before he counts ten the first captain must mention some geographical word beginning with A,—the name of a town, state, river, mountain, bay, sea, etc., any real geographical name actually found on some map. The duty of his side is to think for him, and pass up to him in whispers names for him to mention before the umpire can count ten. If he fails to give a real name before ten is reached the captain of the other side can draw one from the failing side into his own band. Of course he will select the brightest member of the opposing party and add him or her to his own forces. Any one can be drawn save the captains of the two bands.

Then the next letter, B, is taken, beginning always with the side that failed. Soon the fight will wax hot, but gradually one side will absorb the other, which will have to give in beaten. Care must be taken by the "privates" in whispering up words to their captain not to whisper so loud as to give the words away to the opposing captain, who is at liberty to use any word not before used, which he can think of or hear.

This game is very instructive, and cultivates quickness of thinking, hearing and acting.

II.

QUAKER-MEETING.

The company is seated in a circle or around the sides of the room, an umpire stands in the middle with sober dignified mien. Each person tells his right-hand neighbor, something ridiculous to do. No one is allowed to speak, make any sound, or so much as smile, except the person who is doing what he has been told to do. The umpire when all is ready points solemnly at our member of the company, who, at this signal, rises and does what he has been told. If the umpire sees even a smile, or hears a sound from any person, he puts that person out of the game and into another part of the room or into another room. The person who maintains entire gravity the longest is the best Quaker. This game is a good discipline in self-control, and always ends in a hearty laugh all 'round.

III.

SUBSTITUTION.

One goes out and the rest select two words, one a verb, and the other some comical word, as "jumping-jack." The one banished comes in and asks each in turn a question. He must answer it in a sentence which would naturally bring in the verb agreed upon, but instead of using that verb must substitute for it the comical word. The object is for the questioner to guess the word for which it is substituted. For example the verb selected is "walk," and the comical word "cabbage-head." The questioner asks: "Did you enjoy the Symphony concert last evening?" The reply is: "Well, if I had only gone to cabbage-head first I should have enjoyed it better."

IV.

HIDE THE THIMBLE IN PLAIN SIGHT.

One goes into an adjacent room and places a thimble somewhere in plain sight, as on the leg of a large extension table, or over the key of an unused door, or in the fret-work of a bracket or book-case. Then the rest come in and hunt for it. It is surprising how difficult it is to find it.

It must not be hidden so that anything will have to be moved to find it. It must be literally in plain sight. The first one to find it has the privilege of hiding it next time.

V.

WELL-POSTED.

This is one of the best of parlor games. A long list of questions is prepared beforehand by a committee of one or three, covering literature, history, science, art, politics, etiquette, or any other subject on which those who move in cultivated society ought to be "well-posted." These questions are read, and the first person to give the correct answer receives the little slip of paper on which the question is written. A nice box of candy provided by the hostess is given at the close to the person holding the largest number of such slips. He generally "treats the crowd" with it. Here are a half dozen simple questions:

1. Who was "first in peace, first in war, and first in the hearts of his countrymen?"
2. What is the highest mountain in the world?"
3. Who wrote the lines "Break, break, break, on the thy cold gray stones O sea?"
4. How old was Methuselah?
5. What is the difference in time between Boston and San Francisco?
6. What great English painter is noted for his skill in painting animals?

The Word Hunt.

THERE was but little interest manifested in the word building contest which closed the 15th, and the lists of those who did enter showed a marked difference in the results obtained. The leaders and winners were:

Name.	Original List.	Errors.	Corrected List.
Anna Blackie,	686	8	678
Mrs. T. N. McClelland,	693	20	673
J. N. Davis,	683	19	664

The Next Word Hunt.

THE words selected for the next contest are:

WOOD'S NATURAL HISTORY.

The contest will close January 15th, and the first prize will be a copy of Wood's Natural History, valued at \$6.00, which is fully described and illustrated in our premium list. We shall also give to the winner of the *first prize* a copy of "The Lions at Home," a beautiful reproduction in 10 colors of the original painting by Rosa Bonheur, costing \$50,000. The second prize will be any three of the books mentioned in our "Peoples Edition of Standard Works." The third prize will be any two of these books. The fourth a copy of the "Songs of Love" illustrated in our premium list. Such a contest must be of permanent value to every contestant and we hope to see close competition.

Be careful to comply with the rules.

1. Only subscribers can compete but any one may send their subscriptions in with their list of words.
2. Proper names will not be allowed, and only words found in the body of Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, which will be considered a final authority in deciding all disputed points.
3. Prefixes, suffixes and abbreviations will not be counted, nor will plurals be allowed.
4. Words marked "obsolete" will not be counted, unless they are still current in some one of their meanings.
5. Words of different meaning, but spelt the same, count as one word.
6. Words of the same meaning, but spelled differently, count one word for each spelling, unless one is obsolete.
7. No letter can be used more than once in the same word unless used more than once in the word or words used as a basis of the contest.
8. All lists must be written in ink (or on a type-writer) and must be alphabetically arranged, and the words numbered consecutively.
9. The full name and address of the contestant must be written at the top of the first sheet, and also the word used as the basis of the contest.
10. In case of a close contest, the number of errors and the general neatness of the work will be taken into consideration in awarding the prize.
11. The winner of any *first prize* will be debarrd from taking part in the contests for three months after winning such prize.

PUZZLEDOM

CONDUCTED BY CH. ROMDIN.

Address all letters pertaining to this Department to CH. ROMDIN, care PLAIN TALK, Box 3,259, New York City.

All puzzlers are invited to contribute to this department. All accepted puzzles will be paid for, on publication, at the rate of 10 cents each, if from paid-in-advance subscribers. Each puzzle must be original, and must be accompanied by a full and complete solution.

Answers to Puzzles that appeared in the October number.

No. 1. Incognito.

No. 2. Watchman.

No. 3. QUADRELL
UPRAISE
ARTISTS
DAISIES
RISIBLE
ESTELLE
LESSSES

No. 4. One of America's darlings.

No. 5. Illinois.

No. 6. SENSATION
DIAMOND
TRIEND
ITS
Y

No. 7.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Anna; Anna. | 6. sore; Eros. |
| 2. pins; snip. | 7. Otto; Otto. |
| 3. rats; star. | 8. tang; gnat. |
| 4. nuts; stun. | 9. deem; meed. |
| 5. time; emit. | 10. meet; teem. |
- "E. L. H."

No. 8.

1.
P
Put
Pumas
Pumiced
Tactic
set
d
2.
T
Tot
Toxic
Toxic
Tical
Tical
cal
l
3.
T
sap
sabic
Tabular
piled
cad
r

No. 9. WHO WILL WIN THE CAMERA?

No. 10. P-L-under-in-g.

Prize Winners.

No one was fortunate enough to answer all the October puzzles.

The best incomplete list was sent by "Alex," who failed only on No. 4. Will he please select his prize book?

New Puzzles.

No. 1. DOUBLE ACROSTIC. (Seven letter words.)

1. Time between; 2. A portico; 3. Beginning; 4. A closet; 5. Circle of

rays. Primals and finals, name two islands in the Mediterranean.

Orillia, Ont.

"DON."

No. 2.

ANAGRAM.

POOR H'US WISH TAKE HER.

There children dwell who know no parent's care;
Parents, who know no children's love, dwell there;
Dejected widows, with unheeded tears,
And crippled age with more than childhood fears,
The lame, the blind, and, far the happiest they!
The moping idiot and the madman gay.

White Plains, N. Y. "E. L. H."

No. 3.

DIAMONDS.

1. A consonant; 2. A light vehicle;
3. Hot; 4. A kind of hand gun; 5. To emulate; 6. An abbreviation; 7. A consonant.

Roseville, Ill.

"JUPITER."

No. 4.

CHARADE.

A first little maid with total in her hair,
Spied a little white last so exceedingly fair,
That she exultingly cried, "Pon my innocent soul,
I'll put you right in with my bunch of fine whole."
Mendoceno City, Cal. "NED LAND."

No. 5. ARITHMETICAL PUZZLE.

b g y i k l
y l g

y u y u g y
b u k k y d y
y g l k b d

h h n y h y k y

White Plains, N. Y. "HAIGHT."

No. 6. BEHEADINGS.

Behead a bird and leave a fight.

" animal	" verb.
" bird	" complaint.
" bird	" continued.
" fish	" defeat.
" animal	" the first

name of a great violinist.

Behead animals and leave the abbreviation for bad in Latin.

Behead a fish and leave a dish.

The beheaded letters spell a day of merriment.

Fresno, Cal.

"CAROLUS."

No. 7.

ANAGRAM.

LAMOROTH PENS GRIEF'S SONNET.

The glorious sun no more I see,
Spring, carpets not the earth, for me;
Nor wild birds song is wafted nigh
The dreary cell wherein I lie.

Shadow's alone to show that light
In splendor shines beyond my sight.
Only in dreams come flow'rs and song—
How long this life, O God, how long!

Pala, Cal.

"HERCULES."

No. 8. NUMERICAL ENIGMA.

My whole is in the name of one of Shakespeare's plays.

My 17, 1, 7, 20 where 2, 15, 5, 18, 2, 8 is as bad, 1, 16 ever it, 19, 13, 11, 14, 18, 12, 10 outward and 3, 6, 9, 4 the rain in.

Lexington, Ky.

"MC."

No. 9.

CHARADE.

"Pray will you marry me?" he cried.
The "First" the maiden quick replied,
"You've loved the Second all your life,
And, better than become your wife,
'Twould be for me to join the whole
In life of prayer for your poor soul."

Malden, Mass.

"BLAIR ATHOL."

No. 10. VANDYKE (point.)

FIRST POINT: An inferior crown; a boy's name; to clinch; place for baking; trap; syllable; letter.

SECOND POINT: Storm; one of Tennyson's characters; matched; spotted; to finish; a syllable; a letter

Pala, Cal.

"HERCULES."

Prizes.

For first complete set of answers, \$1.00—10 cents a puzzle. If the puzzles are worth that, why shouldn't the answers be worth as much.

For best incomplete list, 10 cents for each puzzle correctly answered.

Puzzle Chat.

Nine different puzzlers contribute the ten puzzles presented this month, California being better represented than any other state.—For the many kind words of greeting received, the present puzzle editor extends his thanks. He hopes to attain success in this department by meriting it. A goodly number of puzzlers have sent in contributions during the past month. Let the good work go on, and let us hear from every member of the fraternity—Keep up the standard of this page. If you send contributions let them be perfect, so far as you can make them.—All right, Hercules, your new anagram appears this month. Let us hope it will meet the views of Incognito, and win you the prize. The book you ask for has been sent you.—Now go in and win, everybody.

A GRAND OFFER.

Who takes the First Set?



We will give an elegant Dinner Set of 112 pieces to any one sending us fifty subscribers. This would make a good present to give mother. We ship it securely packed, the receiver to pay transportation charges. For sale at \$10.

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IN ALL probability many whose attention is attracted to these lines and who follow them through, are familiar with the term "philately," or at least have some conception of what a collection of stamps is, and for what reason they are collected.

However, to those who have yet to learn of this pastime, we drop a word of explanation, or perhaps mention a few pleasures that may be derived from collecting, besides the opportunity of assimilating a vast amount of knowledge.

To an unobserving individual, a quantity of miscellaneous stamps in an ordinary blank book, or perhaps the modern stamp album, would be of no particular interest, and why should it? It is very true that the general appearance may not be altogether attractive, but when each stamp, issued from the various countries is carefully examined, many thoughts suggest themselves, as to the design, if a portrait, of whom? and what position did said person hold? at what time? and so on "*ad infinitum*."

In addition to the general satisfaction and pleasure of accumulating stamps from the old issues to those in current use, one cannot help but acquire considerable information as to the different forms of government, and familiarize himself with the ordinary postal laws.

It is the idea of many, that this "hobby," as it may be called, exists only with children, especially the young boys; this may be true to a certain extent, but scores of smart, well-educated gentlemen, who can afford the time, interest themselves in what too many people call foolishness.

Numerous Philatelic works have been published, written upon various subjects under the one head of Philately; while regular monthly and weekly papers are copiously circulated throughout the land.

As many will at once recognize, the subject of our sketch is that of Mr. C. H. Mekeel, the founder of the well-known C. H. Mekeel Stamp and Publishing Co., St. Louis, Mo.

Mr. Mekeel has a world-wide reputation among philatelists and is regarded with the highest respect, owing to his upright dealings, and estimable character.

He manifested an interest in stamps when a mere boy, and at fourteen commenced dealing in a small way.

A few years later, what had before seemed almost child's play, developed into quite a remunerative business, and occupied many of his spare moments.

At this period, a paper was started known as the "Stamp Collector's Bureau," which was issued in neat form once a month.

During early manhood, Mr. Mekeel was in the employ of the Chicago and Northwestern Railway, but still continued his stamp business by working early and late, until awakened to the danger of such steady confinement, he decided to make a change, and ultimately came to St. Louis, where he again persisted in his old practice of late hours and hard work.

A year passed in this way, and it became evident that either one line of business or the other must be discontinued, or as a consequence, impaired health would follow.

As may be supposed, his decision was in favor of the stamps, and before another year had passed he was con-

vinced that a success could be made of his early start, and being animated to some extent by this thought, he continued, with a determination to make the firm second to none in this or any other country. It was not long before assistants were employed, and more spacious quarters secured, for the accommodation and convenience of those concerned.

At this period the business was well organized and supported a first-class monthly paper, which is still flourishing and known as the "Philatelic Journal of America."

In 1889 two younger brothers, Messrs. G. D. and I. A. Mekeel, associated themselves with the Company; the former having had full charge of the business before Mr. C. H. Mekeel devoted his entire time to it.

Both G. D. and I. A. Mekeel came to St. Louis from New York State, where they were completing their education.

With the increased assistance and still under the management of Mr. C. H. Mekeel, the business thrived until July 1st, 1889, the Company was incorporated under the laws of the State of Missouri, for \$15,000.

At this point Mr. C. H. Mekeel sailed for Europe in the interest of stamps, making a stay of some two months. As a result their stock of stamps was materially increased, and with judicious advertising (in which this firm indulges to an

enormous extent) the business progressed with phenomenal growth, and it was but a short time before the capital was increased to \$30,000 and subsequently on Oct. 10th, 1891, it was capitalized for \$100,000, an amount equal to any firm in the world engaged in a stamp and publishing business.

While these lines are being written, Mr. Mekeel is in Mexico on his second trip to that country: he will undoubtedly visit many of the old cities and other places of interest before his return.

This Company has unequalled facilities at their command whereby they can obtain both old and new issues of Mexican stamps, and are credited as having the largest stock of these special stamps in existence.

Since January 1st, 1891, a weekly paper has been issued, and is a great success. Any collector that does not subscribe to "Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News" is behind the times. It is the first and to our knowledge, the only weekly ever published in the interest of Philately.

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We have now given the reader a crude idea of the western firm, Mekeel, and what originally started as the pastime of a school-boy has grown to be a legitimate, well systematized and lucrative business.

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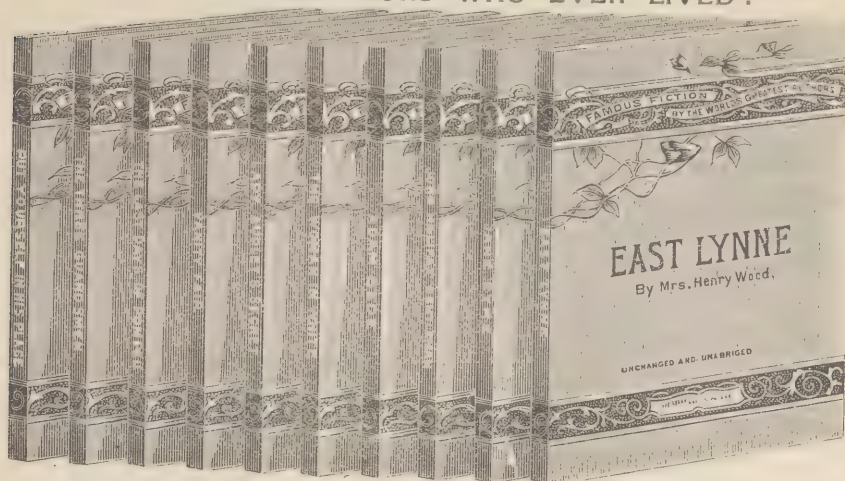
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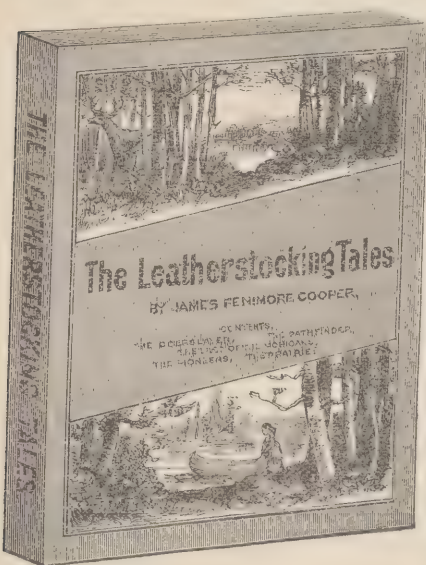
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SONS OF VETERANS

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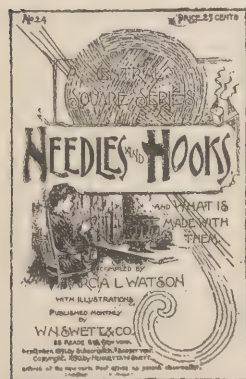
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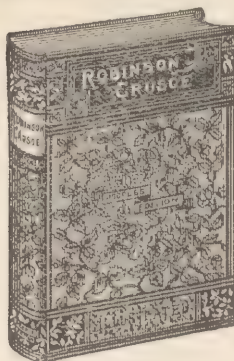
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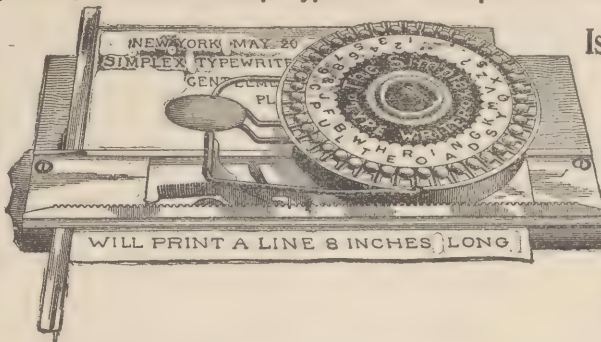
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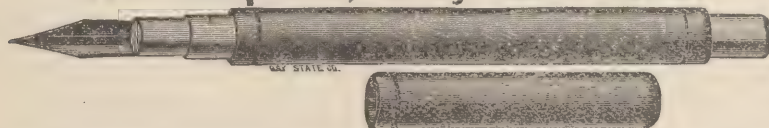
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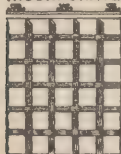
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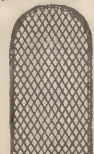
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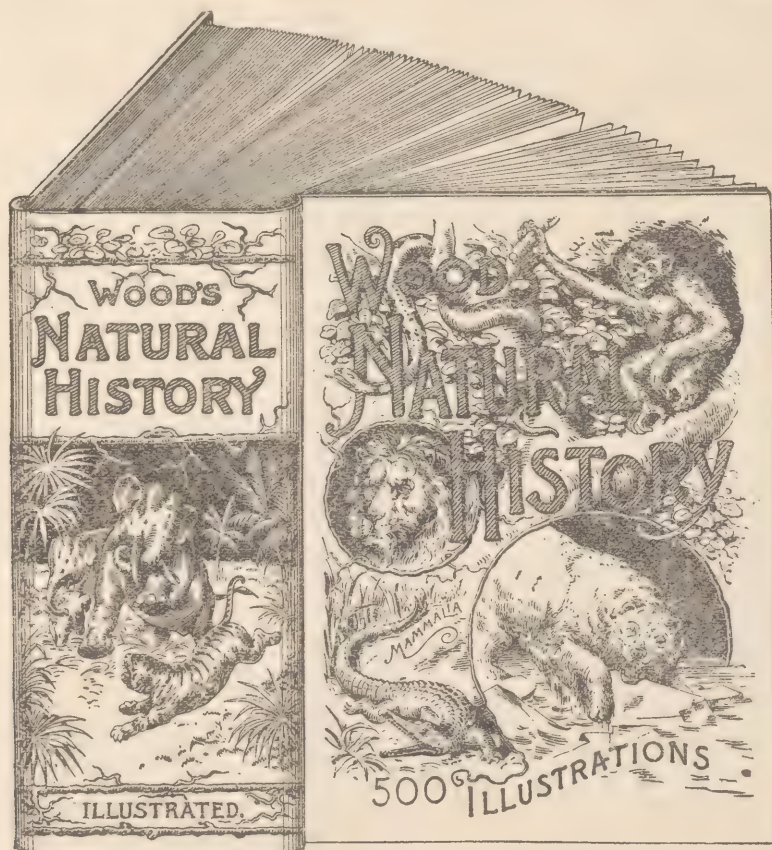
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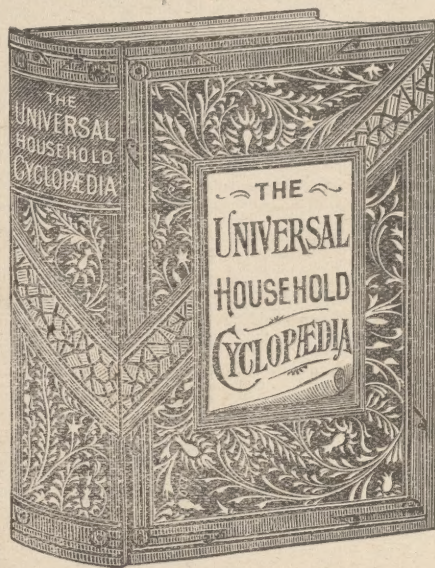
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Coal black Rose.
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Ding-dong bell.
Dolly Varden.
Dream on.
Do not mangle.
Dream song.
Ever of thee.
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Flying trapeze.
Come, landlord, fill.
The flowing bowl.
Crucify to Johnny.
Adieu, dear home.
Dost thou love me.
Dreaming of home.
Fisher's Hornpipe.
Forgive and forget.
Fortune may frown.
Fading will fading.
Father Abbey's will.
Hours there were.
Hear me, Norma.
In happy moments.
I'll pray for thee.
I see them on their
winding way.
I'll be true to thee.
Jock o' Hazeldean.
Know you not that
in my castle.
Love that slumbers.
No wine, no wine.
Little Annie Rooney.
Little maid of Arcadie.
Light flitting shadow.
Let's give three cheers.
Love among the roses.
My Bible leads to glory.
My mother's portrait.
Maryland, my Maryland.
My dear old wife and I.
Melodies of many lands.
Mollie, put the kettle on.
Mr. Grimgruffinoff.
My bonny Mary Dee.
Mother's last request.
My blue-eyed Geraldine.
Merry mountain maids.
Norah, I am waiting.
Not always wealth yields
pleasure.
Noddy of the hazel dell.
Near the banks of that
lone river.
Nothing true but heaven.
Over the bright blue sea.
On to the field of glory.
Off in the silly night.
Oh, would I were a bird.
Oh, childhood's happy
dwelling.
One lock of hair.
O, whistle and I'll come
to you, my lad.
Oh, steer my bark to
Erin's isle.
Oh, George, the boat's
tipping over.

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Last night.
Lord Lovell.
Lullaby.
Little flowers.
Lou's lara belle.
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Lanigan's ball.
Law.
Larboard watch.
Little Bo-Peep.
Lorelei.
Love, love, love.
Little Barfoot.
Light and gay.
Market chorus.
O day of joy.
Oh, this sweet life.
Old Rosin the beau.
Over the mountain.
Rataplan come.
Robinson Crusoe.
Rock a bye baby.
Sing, dardies, sing.
Stop dat knocking.
Simon the cellarer.
Strike the cymbal.
Speak tender words.
Star of Bethlehem.
Solomon's temple.
She is so innocent.
See, comrades, see.
The cobbler's end.
The used up man.
The bird let loose.
The sweetest hours.
The minstrel boy.
The red, red rose.
Prayer during battle.
Roy Roy MacGregor.
Rose, charming Rose.
Sing a song of sixpence.
Sparkling Sunday night.
Song of the skylark.
Spring, gentle spring.
Switzer's song of home.
Scenes that are brightest.
Scarcely could I believe.
The dawn of the day.
The laird o' Cockpen.
There'll never be peace.
Three children sliding
on the ice.
The girl that keeps the
peanut stand.
There was an old woman
who lived in a shoe.
The widow in a cottage
by the sea.
There was a maid went
to the mill.
The monkey's wedding.
Tis all that I can say.
The picture on the wall.
That's the idea exactly.
Tis better not to know.
Thou'rt like a flower.
Twickenham ferry.
Take back the heart.
The heart bow'd down.
The bride's farewell.
The minstrel's return.
The old oaken bucket.
The letter in the candle.

My country.
Miss Winkie.
Maggie's secret.
My queen.
Mollie Mogg.
Mollie Bawn.
My Annie, O'.
Mary Morrison.
Miniature.
Mary Blane.
Money musk.
My sweetheart.
Maid of Athens.
O maidens fair.
Not married yet.
Nell and I.
Nancy Lee.
None can tell.
Sweet Annie.
Old Tubal Cain.
Old King Cole.
O ye tears.
O fair dove.
Swiss boy.
Seventy-two.
The soldier's return.
Ten little niggers.
The vicar of Bray.
Three blind mice.
The old maid's ball.
The musical wife.
The one dear face.
The shipwright.
The broken penny.
The open window.
The love sick boy.
The convent cell.
The sound of harps.
The family Bible.
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The tears that night and
morning.
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The little fisher maiden.
Whisper in the twilight.
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my pretty maid.
Work, niggers, work.
When good King Arthur.
When red leaves fall.
Who dat callin' so sweet.
We'd better bide a wee.
Whiskers five a bag.
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When Bridge goes out
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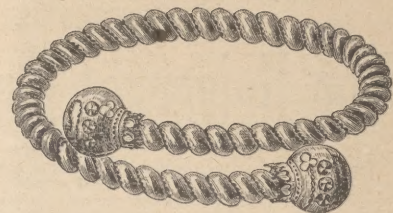
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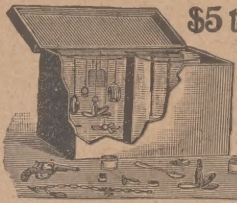
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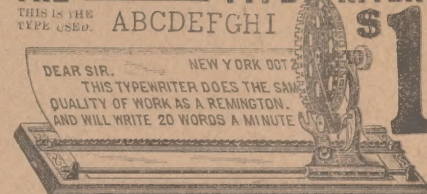
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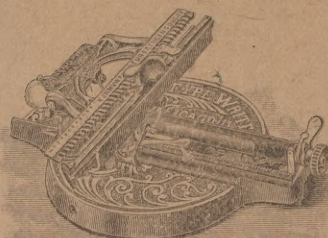
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